2008-09

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Bach Nuit

University of Toronto MacMillan Singers
Doreen Rao, conductor
Christopher Dawes, accompanist

Saturday, October 18, 2008
7:30 pm. Church of the Redeemer

Program

O Magnum Mysterium — **Morten Lauridsen**

Magnificat, movement I — **John Burge**

Fecit Potentiam — **Alberto Grau**

Caron Daley, soprano, Mark Oracion, tenor, Patrick Murray, baritone, Ken Yang, bass

Weinachten (from Sechs Spruche, Op. 79) — **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**

Christmas Oratorio BWV 248, Part II — **Johann Sebastian Bach**

Sinfonia
Recitative: Und es waren Hirten in derselben Gegend
Chorale: Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht
Recitative: Und das habt zum Zeichen
Chorale: Schaut hin, dort liegt im finstern Stall
Aria: Schlafe, mein Leibster, genieße der Ruh
Recitative: Und alsobad war da bei dem Engel
Chorus: Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe
Chorale: Wir singen dir in deinem Heer

Brynn McLeod, mezzo-soprano, Andrew Haji, tenor

- INTERMISSION -

Die Beburt Christi (from Christus, Op. 97) — **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**

Recitative: Da Jesus geboren war zu Bethlehem
Trio: Wo ist der neugeborne König der Juden?
Chorus: Es wird ein Stern aus Jakob aufgeh'n

Laurel Perkins, soprano, Andrew Haji, tenor, Patrick Murray, baritone, Ken Yang, bass
Mark Vuorinen, conductor

Vom Himmel hoch — **Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy**

Chorus: Vom Himmel hoch
Chorale: Er bringt euch alle Seligkeit
Arioso: Das also hat gefallen dir
Chorus: Lob, ehr sei Gott im höchsten Thron

Giovanni Spann, bass

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO MACMILLAN SINGERS
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Program Notes

O Magnum Mysterium
MORTON LAURIDSEN (b.1943)

Morton Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium* was premiered in 1994 by the Los Angeles Master Chorale, conducted by Paul Salamunovitch. Since then, it has become a favorite of hundreds of choirs around the world, making it one of the most performed contemporary choral pieces in the literature. The text is a Responsory for the Matins of Christmas and although there is no biblical reference for the two animals being present at the manger, their presence has been included in artistic and musical portrayals from very early on. Lauridsen's characteristic compositional language of warm, rich harmonies is present throughout. (Note by Mark Vuorinen)

Magnificat
JOHN BURGE (b.1961)

Known also as the Song of Mary, the *Magnificat* is found in the opening chapter of Luke's gospel. The text describes in first person the elation and blessedness that overcomes Mary as she relates the impending birth of Jesus to her sister, Elizabeth. John Burge's *a cappella* choral setting of the *Magnificat* is structured in seven movements. Tonight's performance includes only the first movement. In this work, Burge often divides the choir into six or more parts, which in turn generates a rich harmonic colour or contrapuntal density. (Note by the composer).

Fecit Potentiam
ALBERTO GRAU (b.1931)

Alberto Grau, born in Nov 7, 1931, Spain, is arguably one of the most influential contemporary Venezuelan composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As a renowned choral conductor, Grau is particularly interested in composing for choruses and body percussions. Grau is a nationalistic composer and his works display unique characteristics found commonly in Venezuelan music: the Latin American and Spanish influences to Venezuelan culture can be seen in his compositional technique. *Fecit Potentiam* is a movement from a larger multi-movement setting of the *Magnificat*. Alberto Grau is the Faculty of Music's *Michael and Sonja Koerner Distinguished Visitor in Composition* and will be delivering workshops and lectures in November 2008. (Note by Elaine Choi)

Weinachten
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY (1809-1847)

Weihnachten is one of the six anthems from the choral cycle *Sechs Sprüche*, by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy written between 1843 and 1846. These unaccompanied 8 voices anthems were commissioned by Friedrich Wilhelm IV for the Berlin Cathedral. They cover the main festivals of the liturgical year from Advent to Ascension. The texts were some of the King's favourites, central to the German protestant liturgy. *Weihnachten* is the anthem written for Christmas. The joyful characteristic of this anthem portrays the happiness of the people: celebrating life, land and the arrival of the Saviour. (Note by Elaine Choi)

Christmas Oratorio
JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Written in 1734, Johann Sebastian Bach crafted the Christmas Oratorio as a set of six cantatas that were intended to be performed for the celebrations of Christmas in Leipzig. With the first being performed on Christmas Day, and the last celebrating Epiphany, each cantata bears its own distinctive character correlating to the festivities of each specific day. Bach's choice of text settings includes sixteen carefully selected hymns by varying composers to be set as chorales. As for the text in the other recitatives, choruses, and arias, although the original composer is unknown, sources point to collaboration with well-known poet of the day – Picander.

The second cantata celebrates the announcement of the birth of Christ. The selections performed tonight all depict such a glorious event: Chorale #12 - *Brich an, a schönes Morgenlicht* ("Shine forth, beauteous morning light") – comments on the symbolic appearance of the light, as the Incarnation of God; Chorale #17 - *Schaut hin, dort liegt im finstern Stall* ("Behold! There in the dark stable lies"), speaks of the humble Christ, resting in the manger; and Chorus #21 - *Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe* ("Glory to God in the highest") – joins the forces of all performers in an exuberant song of praise. (Note by Jeanne Yuen)

Christus, Op. 97
Vom Himmel Hoch
FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY

Die Geburt Christi is the first part of Felix Mendelssohn's unfinished oratorio, *Christus, Op. 97.* Published posthumously in 1852, Christus remains a mystery to musicologists as it is difficult to ascertain when Mendelssohn composed the extant material or what his plans for finishing it might have been. The work was to have been a dramatic account of the entire life of Christ. The opening section of the work, dealing with the birth of Christ, consists of a recitative, and trio of men's voices representing the three kings, and a concluding movement for chorus and orchestra. Mendelssohn reaffirms his esteem for the German chorale with his use of the Epiphany hymn: *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern.*

> "Before I left Vienna, a friend of mine made me a present of Luther's hymns, and on reading them over I was again much struck by their power…" - Felix Mendelssohn

Mendelssohn's *Vom Himmel Hoch* is a multi-movement setting of Martin Luther's hymn of the same name. It comes from a period in the early 1830's when sacred music held a prominent place in Mendelssohn's compositional output. The three choral movements are varied treatments of the melody of Luther's hymn, while the arias use only the text of the hymn. Mendelssohn's use of German chorales as the basis of his eight chorale cantatas is an homage to J.S. Bach, a composer for whom he had tremendous admiration. (Note by Mark Vuorinen)

UPCOMING CHOIRS IN CONCERT
Robert Cooper and Brad Ratzlaff, conductors
Women's Chorus and Master Chorale in Vivaldi *Gloria*
Friday, October 24, 2008
7:30 pm. Victoria College Chapel, 91 Charles St. West

Biographies

Dr. Doreen Rao is a distinguished musician and scholar whose work as a conductor and teacher links the standards of professional performance with the goals of music education. Celebrated for her spirited and moving concerts, Dr. Rao's commitment to choral music is recognized in her worldwide appearances as conductor, master class teacher and speaker and in her award-winning Choral Music Experience publications with Boosey & Hawkes. Appointed to the University of Toronto Faculty of Music as the *Elmer Iseler Chair in Conducting*, Doreen Rao has founded the Centre for Advanced Studies in Choral Music, an innovative university enrichment program which connects emerging young singers, conductors, and composers with prominent artists and educators. As Director of Choral Programs, Dr. Rao conducts the MacMillan Singers and the Bach Festival Singers in concerts and collaborations with Helmuth Rilling, Peter Oundjian and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Nexus, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

The **University of Toronto MacMillan Singers** was founded in 1994 by Doreen Rao to celebrate the legacy of Sir Ernest MacMillan, an inspired performer and devoted teacher who influenced every aspect of Canada's musical life. This award-winning ensemble conducted by Doreen Rao regularly performs with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Peter Oundjian. The MacMillan Singers enjoy numerous collaborations with Helmuth Rilling, Nexus, the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Gryphon Trio. Recent seasons have included Festival performances of Bach Cantatas, Mozart C minor Mass, Stravinsky *Les Noces*, and the Mozart Requiem. In October 2007, the MacMillan Singers performed the *St. John Passion BWV 245* in the Toronto Bach Festival.

University of Toronto MacMillan Singers

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Haewoon Yang
Ken Yang
Jeanne Yuen*

**Assistant Conductors ** Teaching Assistant*

Instrumentalists

Violin 1 - Madeline Kapp
Violin II - Natasha Rollings
Viola - Mohsin Bhujwalla
Cello - Bryan Holt
Bass - Adrian Rigopulos
Flutes - Tim Crouch, Roseen Giles
Bassoon - Susan Durnin
Trumpets - Alastair Chaplin, Matthew McCrady
Timpani - Michelle Colton

Texts and Translations

Lauridsen: O Magnum Mysterium

O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepio!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
meruerunt portare
Dominum Christum. Alleluia!

O great mystery,
and wondrous sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord,
lying in their manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

Burge: Magnificat

Magnificat anima mea Dominum
Et exaltavit spiritus meus in Deo, salutari meo.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord
and my spirit exalts in God, my savior.

Grau: Fecit Potentiam

Fecit poténtiam in bráchio súo:,
dispérsit supérbos ménte córdis súi.
Depósuit poténtes de séde
et exaltávit húmiles;
Esuriéntes implévit bónis
et dívites dimísit inánes.

He has shown strength with his arm:
he has scattered the proud,
even the arrogant of heart.
He has deposed the mighty from their seats,
and exalted the humble.
The hungry he has filled with good things,
and the rich he has sent empty away.

Mendelssohn: Weinachten (from Sechs Spruche, op. 79)

Frohlokket, ihr Völker auf Erden,
und preiset Gott!
Der Heiland ist erschienen,
den der Herr verheissen.
Er hat seine Gerechtigkeit der Welt offenbaret.
Halleluja!

Rejoice, ye good people on Earth,
and give praise to God!
The Saviour has appeared,
as the Lord had promised.
To the world all his majesty
the Lord has revealed. Hallelujah!

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Bach: Christmas Oratorio BWV 248, Part II

Recitative
Und es waren Hirten in derselben
Gegend auf dem Felde bei den Hürden,
die hüteten des Nachts ihre Herde.
Und siehe, des Herren Engel trat zu ihnen,
und die Klarheit des Herren leuchtet um sie,
und sie furchten sich sehr.

And there were shepherds in that very region
in the field nearby their sheepfolds, who kept
their watch by night over their flocks. And see
now, the angel of the Lord came before them,
and the glory of the Lord shone round about
them, and they were sore afraid.

Chorale
Brich an, o schönes Morgenlicht,
und laß den Himmel tagen!
Du Hirtenvolk, erschrecke nicht,
weil dir die Engel sagen,
daß dieses schwache Knäbelein
soll unser Trost und Freude sein,
dazu den Satan zwingen
und letztlich Friede bringen!

Break forth, o lovely morning light,
and light up the dawn sky!
You shepherd-folk, don't be afraid,
for the angels tell you
that this weak little boy
shall be our comfort and joy,
shall compel Satan as well
and in the end bring peace!

Recitative
Und das habt zum Zeichen: Ihr werdet
finden das Kind in Windeln gewickelt und
in einer Krippe liegen.

And let this be your sign: ye will
discover the babe in swaddling clothes there
wrapped and in a manger lying.

Chorale
Schaut hin, dort liegt im finstern Stall,
des Herrschaft gehet überall!
Da Speise vormals sucht'ein Rind,
da ruhet itzt der Jungfrau'n Kind.

Look there, he lies in manger drear
Whose power reacheth ev'rywhere!
Where fodder once the ox did seek,
There resteth now the Virgin's child.

Aria
Schlafe, mein Liebster, genieße der Ruh,
Wache nach diesem vor aller Gedeihen!
Labe die Brust,
Empfinde die Lust,
Wo wir unser Herz erfreuen!

Sleep now, my dearest, enjoy now thy rest,
Wake on the morrow to flourish in splendor!
Lighten thy breast,
With joy be thou blest,
Where we hold our heart's great pleasure!

Recitative
Und alsobald war da bei dem Engel die Menge
der himmlischen Heerscharen, die lobten Gott
und sprachen:

And suddenly there was with the angel
the multitude of the host of heaven,
there praising God and saying:

Chorus
Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe,
und Friede auf Erden, und den Menschen
ein Wohlgefallen.

Glory to God in the highest
and peace on the earth now and to mankind
a sign of favor.

Chorale
Wir singen dir in deinem Heer
aus aller Kraft Lob, Preis und Ehr.
Daß du, o lang gewünschter Gast,
dich nunmehr eingestellet hast.

We sing to thee amidst thy host
With all our strength, laud, fame and praise,
That thou, O long desiréd guest,
Art come into this world at last.

Mendelssohn: Die Beburt Christi

Recitative
Da Jesus geboren war zu Bethlehem,
im jüdischen Lande,
da kamen die Weisen vom Morgenlande
gen Jerusalem und beteten ihn an:

When Jesus our Lord was born in Bethlehem,
in the land of Judea,
behold, from the east to the city of
Jerusalem there came wise men, and said:

Trio
Wo ist der neugeborne König der Juden?
Wir haben seinen Stern geseh'n und sind
gekommen, ihn anzubeten.

Where is he, born the king of Judea?
For we have seen his star, and are come
to adore him.

Chorus
Es wird ein Stern aus Jakob aufgeh'n,
und ein Szepter aus Israel kommen.
Und wird zerschmettern Fürsten und Städte.
Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern!
O welch' ein Glanz geht auf vom Herrn,
uns Licht und Trost zu geben!
Dein Wort, Jesu, is die Klarheit,
fürht zur Wahrheit und zum Leben.
Wer kann dich genug erheben!

There shall a star from Jacob come forth,
and a sceptre from Israel rise up,
and dash in pieces princes and nations.
As bright the star of morning gleams,
so Jesus sheddeth glorious beams
of Light and consolation!
Thy word, Jesus, radiance darting,
truth imparting, gives salvation.
Thine be praise and adoration!

Mendelssohn: Vom Himmel hoch

Chorus
Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her,
Ich bring euch gute neue;
Der guten Mär bring ich so viel,
Davon ich singen und sagen will.

From heaven on high I come to you;
I bring you good new tidings!
I bring you so many good tidings
of which I want to sing and speak.

Euch ist ein Kindlein heut geborn
Von einer Jungfrau auserkorn,
Ein Kindelein so zart und fein,
Das soll eur Freud und Wonne sein.

To you this day a tiny child is born
of a chosen virgin;
A child so gently and fine
who shall be your joy and delight.

Chorale
Er bringt euch alle Seligkeit,
Die Gott, der Vater, hat bereit.
Daß ihr mit uns im Himmelreich,
Sollt leben nun und ewiglich.

He brings you all salvation,
which God the Father hath prepared
so that you shall live with us in the kingdom
of Heaven, now and forevermore.

Arioso
Das also hat gefallen dir,
Die Wahrheit anzuzeigen mir.
Wie alle Welt Macht, Ehr und Gut vor dir,
Vor dir nichts gilt, nichts hilft noch tut.

And therefore, Lord, it pleases thee
to manifest this truth to me:
All worldly honour, power, and wealth
For thee are of no help or worth.

Chorus
Lob, Ehr sei Gott in höchsten Thron,
Der uns schenkt ein'gen Sohn;
Des Freuen sich der Engel Schar'
Und singen uns solch neues Jahr.

Praise and honour be to God on the highest Throne,
who gives to us his only son,
about which the host of angels rejoices
and sings to us of such a new year.

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